

## Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5925

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0273

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, OREP

SUBJECT: SENATOR ABOUREZK'S CONTACTS WITH YASIR 'ARAFAT

REF: TEL AVIV 110 (NOTAL)

1. PRO-FEDAYEEN AL MUHARRIR REPORTED DEC. 30 THAT SENATOR ABOUREZK, DURING VISIT PREVIOUS DAY TO HIS ANCESTRAL VILLAGE OF KEFAIR IN SOUTHEAST LEBANON, MET "NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN LEADERS AND DISCUSSED WITH THEM RECENT ME DEVELOPMENTS BEARING ON PALESTINIAN QUESTION". PAPER ALSO NOTED THAT SENATOR WAS RECEIVED, AT HIS REQUEST, ON DEC. 28 BY 'ARAFAT FOR "GET-ACQUAINTED MEETING" IN WHICH ABOUREZK REPORTEDLY OBTAINED FEDAYEEN VIEWS ON "CURRENT MOVES AFFECTING ME CRISIS".

2. MUHARRIR STORY IS FACTUALLY INCORRECT, SINCE WE ARE CERTAIN SENATOR ABOUREZK HAD NO OPPORTUNITY TO SEE 'ARAFAT DEC. 28 (DAY ON WHICH THIS EMBASSY HAD CONTROL OF HIS MOVEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS). HIS TRIP TO KEFAIR ON DEC. 29 WAS MARKED BY BRIEF (15 MINUTE) "COURTESY" VISIT TO LOCAL FEDAYEEN COMMAND POST LOCATED ON HILL ABOVE TOWN, BUT SENATOR LATER TOLD EMBOFF HE HAD SPOKEN ONLY TO NUMBER OF RANK-AND-FILE WHO WERE PRESENT ON THAT OCCASION.

3. WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT ABOUREZK DID MEET PRIVATELY FOR TWO HOURS WITH 'ARAFAT AND CERTAIN OTHER MEMBERS OF PLO EX COMM (INCLUDING SA'IQA'S ZOHAYR MUHSEN) DURING EVENING DEC. 27,

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SEVERAL HOURS AFTER HIS ARRIVAL HERE. MEETING WAS ARRANGED BY

LEBANESE FRIENDS OF SENATOR. HE INFORMED EMBOFFS AFTERWARDS THAT 'ARAFAT HAD DWELT AT LENGTH ON NEED FOR USG TO PAY GREATER ATTENTION TO PALESTINIAN "RIGHTS" IN SEEKING ME PEACE SETTLEMENT. IMPLICATION SEEMED TO BE THAT 'ARAFAT--AS WE HAVE REPORTED IN OTHER CONTEXTS (E.G., BEIRUT 0064)--IS WAITING FOR GENEVA TALKS TO PRODUCE GREATER CLARIFICATION OF WHAT FEDAYEEN CAN EXPECT TO OBTAIN FROM SETTLEMENT BEFORE CONFRONTING DIVISIVE ISSUE OF PLO ASSOCIATION WITH SETTLEMENT EFFORT HEAD-ON.

4. SINCE CODEL PARTY INCLUDED BOTH JOURNALIST AND PHOTOGRAPHER, WE EXPECT NEWS STORIES WILL APPEAR SOON IN US PRESS (NOTABLY MID-WEST CHAIN OF PAPERS OWNED BY RIDDER PUBLICATIONS) GIVING ADDITIONAL DETAILS RE SENATOR'S TALK WITH 'ARAKAT.

COMMENT: THE ABOVE IS GIVEN TO TEL AVIV FOR ITS INFORMATION ONLY. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW THE SENATOR WANTS TO HANDLE INQUIRIES RE HIS TALKS WITH 'ARAFAT AND CONSEQUENTLY RECOMMEND THAT RESPONSE TO SUCH INQUIRIES BE DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER THE SENATOR'S ARRIVAL IN TEL AVIV. BUFFUM

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